THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Government have approved indigenous construction of an Air Defence Ship (ADS) of 37,500 Metric Tons for the Indian Navy at a cost of Rs. 2880 crore at Cochin Shipyard Ltd. The Construction of ADS is likely to be completed by 2011-2012. The ADS would be capable of performing the roles that most other aircraft carriers in the world are capable of.

Indian Navy is presently having one aircraft carrier *viz.* INS Viraat which is 45 years old. Though this carrier was originally scheduled for de-commissioning in 2007, efforts would be made to keep the platform operationally available until the ADS is inducted. With the induction of ADS, the capacity of the Navy to neutralise threats and initiate offensive action in support of land forces and in the execution of amphibious tasks would be enhanced.

Identity Cards for Illegal Migrants from Bangladesh

4388. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to issue identity cards for the illegal migrants from Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh as on 1st January, 2005; and

(d) whether Government are aware that the proposal to issue identity cards for these migrants, if under considration would met with stiff opposition in the country, particularly Assam and North-East?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Government is engaged in intra and inter-Ministerial consultations regarding the desirability and feasibility of issuance of Identity Cards to non-citizens as the matter has both administrative and legal implications.

(c) No firm estimates of illegal migrants from Bangladesh are available because they enter surreptitiously and are able to mingle easily with the local population due to ethnic and lingusitic similarities.

(d) The Government will try and build a national consensus in case it decides to implement the scheme in the entire country.

Distinguishing Bangladesh migrants

4389. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a proposal has been formulated to distinguish between Indian citizens and the illegal Bangladeshi migrants on the basis of separate identity cards and a pilot project for such door-to-door verification is already in progress; and

(b) if so, the details thereof including restrictions proposed, if any, relating to the right to vote, movement in the country, drawing benefits available under the PDS, etc., and its present status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) and (b) The Government proposes to prepare a National Register of Indian Citizens and issue Multipurpose National Identity Cards to the citizens of the country. Keeping in view the complexities involved, a Pilot Project has been undertaken on an experimental basis in a few selected sub-districts of 12 States and one Union Territory. Since the issuance of Identity Cards to non-citizens has both administrative and legal implications, the Government is engaged in intra and inter-Ministerial consultations regarding the desirability and feasibility of issuing such Cards to the non-citizens. No final decision on the issue has so far been taken by the Government.

Smuggling of Contrabands

4390. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that smuggling of contrabands such as opium is taking place along the Afghanistan, Pakistan route;